

authority from the great body of zoologists in the country where they are put forth. Thus we have the British code, called the Stricklandian, from the moving spirit of its publisher. Then we have the American, the French, and the German, all agreeing in the main, but differing in details, and each difference leading to confusion. At present no agreement has been arrived at, but the confusion must be put a stop to, and an attempt is to be made. In the meanwhile the German zoologists are bringing out a work known as *Das Thierreich*, which is to include a description of every known species of animal, and they propose that from that there shall be no appeal, for priority further back than that will be disregarded.

Those who wish to know more of the difficulties which hedge round the question of zoological nomenclature, may consult a paper by Dr. Sclater, which appeared in the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London" for 1896, and which contains references to the principal literature.

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## NOTES ON THE SQUARE-TAILED CUCKOO.

By A. J. CAMPBELL.

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 9th May, 1898.)

THERE has been some little confusion about the identity of the Square-tailed Cuckoo, *Cuculus variolosus*, Horsf. It now appears that both Gould's *C. insperatus* and *C. dumetorum* are none other than the original *C. variolosus* of Dr. Horsfield, therefore the bird, in the season, ranges over Australia, thinning out in numbers as the southern seaboard is approached.

At first sight this cuckoo may be easily mistaken for the familiar Fantailed Cuckoo, *C. flabelliformis*, but differs from that bird by its decidedly smaller size and more square-shaped tail, which is also destitute of the white markings on the outer webs of the feathers.

The Square-tailed, or, as it has been more commonly called, the Brush Cuckoo, may also be recognized by its peculiar song—a few melancholy, jerky notes, ending abruptly, as if the strain were suddenly interrupted or the songster had received some kind of a shock in the middle of its song. The egg of this cuckoo is exceedingly suggestive of those of the *Myiagra* type of Fly-catchers.

Dr. T. P. Lucas was the first collector who discovered this strange cuckoo's egg, which he took when in company with his brother, Mr. A. S. H. Lucas, from the nest of the White-shafted Fantail, near Box Hill, Victoria, New Year's Day, 1884. But Dr. Lucas unfortunately discounted his discovery by describing the strange egg as that of the Black-eared Cuckoo, *Miscoculus palliolatus*, see *Victorian Naturalist*, February, 1884.

In the P.L.S., N.S.W., 1888 (vol. iii., 2nd series, p. 421), Dr. G. Hurst drew attention to and described a similar strange egg he had found on the 22nd December, 1887, in a nest of the Blue Wren, *Malurus cyaneus*, and attributed to the Brush or Square-tailed Cuckoo. At the same time he mentioned that a friend—Mr. Waterhouse—had on three occasions taken similar eggs from the nest of the White-shafted Fantail. In the "Records of the Australian Museum" Mr. A. J. North states that Dr. Hurst had again found other eggs in the nests of the White-shafted Fantail, notably in the month of December, while another Sydney collector, Mr. S. W. Moore, M.L.C., also found the same species of cuckoo's eggs in the nest of the Yellow-faced Honey-eater, *P. chrysops*. Mr. North proceeds to remark:—"All these cuckoos' eggs were obtained within a radius of ten miles of Sydney, and it is a matter of regret that the opportunity was not taken of placing them in nests convenient for observation and hatching the young out, as was done by Dr. Ramsay and his brothers, at Dobroyde, with the eggs of *C. pallidus*, *C. flabelliformis*, *L. plagosus*, and *L. basalis*, so as to conclusively determine to which species they belong; but there can be no doubt Dr. Hurst was right in ascribing the eggs obtained by him and his friends to *C. insperatus* (i.e., *variolosus*), as it is the only other species of cuckoo found near Sydney, the eggs of which we were, until then, unacquainted with."

However, Mr. Dudley Le Souëf, with the assistance of his friend Mr. R. Hislop, knocked the nail on the head by settling the parentage of these strange eggs beyond doubt. During his trip to the Cooktown district (Q.), on the 17th November, 1896, he found one in the nest of the Dusky or Brown-backed Honey-eater, *Glycyphila modesta*. Mr. Hislop afterwards found another nest of the Honey-eater containing the cuckoo's egg, which was "shepherded" till the young parasite was hatched and just able to fly. The interesting youngster was sent (dead, of course), to Mr. Le Souëf, who in turn referred it to the Australian Museum, the verdict being that it was the young of the *C. variolosus*.

When in New South Wales recently I had the pleasure of examining some of these new eggs in the collection of Mr. S. W. Moore, at Homebush; in fact, he kindly presented me with one, together with the pair of White-shafted Fantail's taken from the same nest. Mr. Moore found or was present at the finding of the following nests containing eggs of the Square-tailed Cuckoo at Westwood, 13 miles from Sydney:—Yellow-faced Honey-eater, date 4/12/91; White-shafted Fantail (two nests), date 26/12/91; do., 9/12/93; do., 16/12/93.

Further interesting finds were made in Victorian forests. During October, 1897, Mr. G. E. Shepherd found the cuckoo's egg with two eggs of the Scarlet-breasted Robin, and Mr. J.

Gabriel took another, together with a pretty set of the Rose-breasted Robin's, in December last year (1897).

My son Archie has handed me the following note :—"31st December, 1896.—Observed a pair of Scarlet Robins feeding a fully-fledged Brush Cuckoo, which was perched on the naked branch of a tree near Bayswater. Both male and female robins were tending it. After darting to deposit food in the cuckoo's mouth, the little robins would, alternately, always sit on the branch, a foot or two away, for several seconds, as if seriously contemplating the importance of their charge, before flying off again."

Mr. Shepherd has observed on the Mornington Peninsula that the Square-tailed Cuckoo is decidedly rare and shy, and seems partial to secluded spots. In this last respect it resembles the Fantailed Cuckoo.

List, to date, of the known foster parents of the Square-tailed Cuckoo :—

VERNACULAR NAME.	SCIENTIFIC NAME.	BY WHOM FIRST RECORDED OR REPORTED.
Blue Wren ... ..	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i> ...	Dr. G. Hurst
White-shafted Fantail ...	<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i> ...	Hurst—Waterhouse
Yellow-faced Honey-eater ...	<i>Ptilotis chrysops</i> ...	North—Moore
Brown-backed Honey-eater ...	<i>Glycyphila modesta</i> ...	D. Le Souëf
Shrike Tit ... ..	<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i> ...	G. A. Kearnland
Scarlet-breasted Robin ...	<i>Petroeca leggii</i> ...	G. E. Shepherd
Rose-breasted Robin...	<i>P. rosea</i> ...	J. Gabriel

## DESCRIPTION OF A NEW AUSTRALIAN LABIATE PLANT.

By J. G. LUEHMANN, F.L.S.

HEMIGENIA MACPHERSONI, Luehmann (section, *Homalochilus*).

A shrub of about 5 feet with glabrous nearly terete branchlets. Leaves mostly in whorls of three, narrow-linear, faintly 1-nerved, glabrous, 1 to 2 inches long, not narrowed at the base, rather acute, flaccid. Flowers axillary, on short pedicels. Bracts very deciduous. Calyx hairy at the base, becoming somewhat scarious in age, 2-lipped, the upper lip about 4 lines long, broadly ovate, 3-lobed, the lateral lobes very small, rounded; lower lip small, 2-toothed. Corolla about  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long, orange with purplish veins, or occasionally the whole corolla purplish, slightly hairy outside, inside with rather long hairs at the base of the lower lip and at the insertion of the stamens; upper lip with two short rounded lobes, lower lip 3-lobed, the lateral lobes deltoid, rounded, the middle lobe broader than long, 2-lobed, and irregularly indented. Stamens: the two upper ones with the sterile end of the connective fringed, the lower ones each with one fertile and one smaller non-pollen bearing anther-cell. Fruit not seen.

Near Mount Magnet, Western Australia; W. S. Macpherson.